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We Will Not Be Cowed by Barbaric Killers

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By David Cameron and Barack Obama

When Nato last met in Britain in 1990 the Cold War was ending. As Margaret Thatcher and President Bush Sr pledged to continue to stand together, many might have thought that a new era of peace and prosperity would make this great security alliance less relevant. But today Nato is as vital to our future as it has ever been.

We meet at a time when the world faces many dangerous and evolving challenges. To the east, Russia has ripped up the rulebook with its illegal, self-declared annexation of Crimea and its troops on Ukrainian soil threatening a sovereign nation state. To the south, there is an arc of instability from north Africa and the Sahel to the Middle East.

The growth of technology and globalisation, for all its great benefits and opportunities, has put power once reserved for states in the hands of the individual, raising the capacity of terrorists to do harm. The utterly despicable murders of two American journalists by Isil [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] are but the latest evidence of a brutal and poisonous extremism that murders indiscriminately and risks exporting terrorism abroad.

There are some who say that we shouldn't get involved in addressing these threats. There are others who doubt if Nato can adapt to meet the challenges we face. It is crucial we address these beliefs head on.

First, those who want to adopt an isolationist approach misunderstand the nature of security in the 21st century. Developments in other parts of the world, particularly in Iraq and Syria, threaten our security at home.

And Nato is not just an alliance of friends who come to the aid of each other in times of need. It is also an alliance based on national self-interest. Whether it is regional aggression going unchecked or the prospect that foreign fighters could return from Iraq and Syria to pose a threat in our countries, the problems we face today threaten the security of British and American people, and the wider world.

Our nations have always believed that we are more prosperous and secure when the world is more prosperous and secure. So we have a real stake in making sure they grow up in a world where schoolgirls are not kidnapped, women are not raped in conflict and families aren't slaughtered because of their faith or political beliefs. That is why we have decimated core al-Qaeda and supported the Afghan people. And it is why we will not waver in our determination to confront Isil. If terrorists think we will weaken in the face of their threats they could not be more wrong.

Countries like Britain and America will not be cowed by barbaric killers. We will be more forthright



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in the defence of our values, not least because a world of greater freedom is a fundamental part of how we keep our people safe.

Second, we believe that Nato can adapt to meet the new challenges we face. The changes we need are clear. With Russia trying to force a sovereign state to abandon its right to democracy at the barrel of a gun, we should support Ukraine's right to determine its own democratic future and continue our efforts to enhance Ukrainian capabilities. We must use our military to ensure a persistent presence in eastern Europe, making clear to Russia that we will always uphold our Article 5 commitments to collective self-defence.

And we must back this up with a multinational rapid response force, composed of land, air, maritime and special forces, that could deploy anywhere in the world at very short notice. All this will also require investment from Nato countries in the necessary capabilities.

Britain and America are two of only four Nato members to meet the target of spending 2 per cent of our GDP on defence and other states must urgently step up their efforts to meet this too. This would send a powerful message to those that threaten us that our collective resolve is as strong as ever. But while a strong security response is essential, we cannot rely on our military strength alone. We must use all the resources at our disposal — military, economic and political.

Terrorists thrive on political instability. So we must invest in the building blocks of free and open societies, including creating a genuinely inclusive government in Iraq that unites all Iraqis, including Sunni, Shia, Kurdish, Christian and other minority populations. When the threats to our security increasingly emanate from outside Nato's borders, we must build more partnerships with others who share our values and want a tolerant and peaceful world.

That includes supporting the partners who are taking the fight to Isil on the ground, as we have done by stepping up support for Kurdish and Iraqi security forces. And we should use our expertise to provide training and mentoring to forces elsewhere, whether in Georgia or the Middle East, strengthening the capacity of forces there to tackle local threats.

We must also work with international organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe to uphold democratic norms, which is why they have been invited to our summit. And we must recognise that we can and should use all levers, including those outside the alliance, such as the economic pressure that is being brought to bear on Russia's economy.

By working together we are stronger, whether in standing up to Russia or confronting Isil. So in Newport today we must summon up the shared resolve that inspired Nato's founding fathers. With more than 60 countries represented at the summit, we can build this proud alliance of transatlantic nations into a more effective security network that fosters stability around the world. A network that Britain and America will continue to lead not just because it is morally right to do so, but because it is only by supporting peace, democracy and human rights around the globe that we will keep British and American families safe.